

City of Newport Beach

Newport Beach City Arts Commission Thursday, August 11, 2011 – 5:00pm Central Library Conference Room

Convened at 5:01pm

Call to Order and Roll Call:

Commissioners Present: Robyn Grant, Arlene Greer, Rita Goldberg, Robert Smith
Gil Lasky. Christopher Trela arrived at 5:15.

Commissioners Absent: Carole Boller

Staff Present: Cynthia Cowell, Library Director; Jana Barbier, Cultural Arts Coordinator

Public Present: Jim Mosher; Jerry King, Lynn Crutchley, Ellie Palk, Board of Library
Trustees; Susan Giangrande, Budget Manager; Tracy McCraner, Finance
Director; Leonie Mulvihill, Assistant City Attorney

Public Comments:

Lynn Crutchley discussed a recent Board of Library Trustees meeting and thanked Arts Commissioner Robert Smith for being present. She explained that there was a motion on the floor at the meeting to wait for further information on the donation and placement of a 'Skydivers' sculpture from the Irvine Company. Crutchley noted that she did want to express her personal opinion regarding not wanting the Skydivers at the Central Library site.

Ellie Palk noted that she echoed what Lynn had said, and related that the library may need the space being discussed in the future. Palk stated that people like the sculpture but that she would like to see it somewhere else.

Jerry King also discussed not wanting the 'Skydivers' sculpture at the library and also noted that the library space recommended may eventually be used for a library expansion. King also discussed that the sculpture had been carefully selected for the Newport Center site and hoped that the Arts Commission would spend some additional time considering an alternative site, in the area currently slated as a storm water retention basin.

Approval of Minutes: It was MSP (Greer/Trela) to approve the July 14, 2011 minutes.

Continued Business: Robyn Grant thanked staff for monthly staff reports.

Staff Report /Calendar/Correspondence – Reviewed and filed.

Correspondence/Press – None

Committee Updates – Grant postponed committee updates until the end of the meeting

New Business

Budget Presentation (“Arts Commission Budget 101”) Budget Manager, Susan Giangrande provided a brief description of the funds used by the Arts Commission and noted that the funds are part of the City’s General Fund. Giangrande discussed that a budget analysis is updated annually, and that the Arts Commission would again receive \$55,000 in the 2011-12 fiscal year. She noted that the process would be the same in 2013.

Arts Commission Chair, Robyn Grant said that she had tried to become more aware of the Arts Commission budget and noted that the commission does a lot of programming with the money they receive. She asked how the commission could utilize revenue generated by the museum tour program and Newport Beach Art Exhibition.

Susan Giangrande noted that the City does appreciate the programs that the Art Commission is involved in. She stated also that funds are kept in specifically designated accounts as approved by City Council and that it is not the City’s policy to generate money and put it back into an expenditure or revenue account. All monies generated from programs have to be budgeted annually. Giangrande noted that City Council is able to see each year the monies that are raised.

Finance Director, Tracy McCraner discussed that the General Fund is financed with tax dollars and that this fund is specifically planned each year. She noted that the Arts Commission could go to City Council and ask for an increase in the revenue allocation, and that this might be easier than trying to include revenue in an expenditure account.

Commissioner Goldberg noted that the initial concept of offering more cultural activities was to generate money and that she did not want this to be prohibitive; she asked if the expenditure account could be increased along with the revenue account and wondered if they needed to take this extra step.

Commissioner Lasky noted that when the Arts Foundation brings in funding, it is designated for specific programs and goes to City Council for approval. Commissioner Goldberg thanked Tracy McCraner and Susan Giangrande for attending and answering their questions. It was noted that the Arts Foundation had \$15,000 in their account and that Commissioner Smith had asked the Foundation to designate these monies for art in the new civic center.

Skydivers Sculpture Discussion and Potential Vote: Commissioner Smith discussed the opposition to accept the donation of the Skydiver Sculpture. He noted that he had asked Peter Walker of Peter Walker Partners, Landscape Architecture, to provide guidance on a location to site this work. Smith passed out a master plan of the civic center and park, and noted that the blue squares designated places where ‘monumental’ public artwork could be placed. He then passed around a letter from Peter Walker and noted that Mr. Walker recommended the library’s Bamboo Courtyard as a setting.

Staff assisted Commissioner Smith with the review of slides that had been prepared showing how the sculpture would look in various Central Library locations. Smith noted that the sculptures were approximately twice the size of a human form. Discussion ensued regarding the architecture at Central Library. Commissioner Smith said that he had personally met with Councilpersons Selich, Rosansky and Hill about the sculpture. Smith provided background information on how the sculpture had been suggested for the City in the first place, and stated that the Arts Commission's job was to be sure proposed art donations be original, safe and fully restored. He listed the preferences for sites A,B, C and D in the slides, and noted that "A", the Bamboo Courtyard, was the preferred location.

Smith then passed out a proposal he had asked for from a sculpture restoration and installation contractor to install the piece at Central Library. Commissioner Smith asked if the Arts Commission wanted to make a recommendation to Council to accept the sculpture. Discussion ensued as to restoration, placement, timing and whether the money to restore the sculpture could be spent on other projects. It was noted that the sculpture was originally suggested for the civic center, but that Peter Walker Partners was opposed to this location; and also, the Orange County Museum of Art would be overseeing this section of the project.

Commissioner Goldberg stated that seeing the sculpture's concrete columns in the slides clarified for her that the piece would not work there. She also noted that it bothered her that three Board of Library Trustees had attended to oppose any recommendations to place the sculpture at the library. Commissioner Greer asked what the deadline was for acceptance of the sculpture and it was noted that the Irvine Company wanted a decision. Discussion ensued as to each Arts Commissioner's opinion and included comments that the sculpture was too big for the location, that the theme did not fit with the Newport Beach community. Other opinions were in favor, and acquiesced to the recommendation by Peter Walker Partners. Commissioner Greer asked if the Arts Commission could get more time to consider this item and noted that it was troubling that the Library Trustees were opposing this installation.

Library Director, Cynthia Cowell noted as a matter of clarification that the entire Bamboo Courtyard had been donated by the Rotary Club of Okazaki as a gift to the citizens of Newport Beach.

Committee Assignments - Commission Chair, Grant decided to suspend further discussion on committee assignments. She asked that everyone review the committees and make their recommendations to her. Commissioner Goldberg asked that Museum Tours be a separate committee.

Future Agenda Items – "Skydivers" sculpture discussion and potential vote.

Commissioner Announcements – Commissioner Trela announced that he had been asked to serve on the Crystal Cove Alliance.

Adjournment – Meeting was adjourned at 6:37pm